

Roger Comes Home

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Summary: Jeanie's son Roger decides that he needs help with his addiction, and seeks out Jeanie and Berger...takes place in the Banana Blow Jobs universe Roger is Roger from RENT and Jeanie and Berger are from HAIR...

Roger Comes Home

(** (I don't own Rent or Hair. I'm just borrowing them to play with for my own sick pleasure, hope you enjoy. Just a bit of trivia-toothpick girl was me I didn't pull it off a odd medical case website, it was me and I totally have a small toothpick phobia now and it's all my mom's fault and she knows it, lol cause I tell her every time I see one.)**)

Jeanie Ryan was sitting in her living room reading, hoping it would take her mind off the fact that she hadn't heard from her 23 year old son Roger in a week. He hadn't been keeping in touch with her as much as he used to lately. She knew it was the drugs Roger had started taking the year before, what worried her was she usually heard from him by now. She was so caught up in her thoughts she almost didn't hear the rapid knocking on the door.

"Hang on! Who is it?" There was no response. She looked through the peephole and saw her baby in distress. "Berger!" She yelled to her best friend and roommate.

"What?"

"Get out here and help me, it's Roger." She quickly opened the door, and noticed that he was in such a state that he hadn't seen or heard her open the door. "Roger? Honey?" She asked gently knowing she had to be careful. She had never been afraid of her son and she never would be but right now she wasn't sure what condition he was in mentally.

"Mom?"

"I'm here Baby, how'd you get here?"

"Um, I think I took a cab or walked. I don't remember. Mom why can't I remember?"

"Oh Honey, come here." She said pulling his trembling figure into a hug.

"Come on Jeanie; let's get him to the couch" Said Berger joining her at the door.

"Stay with him, I'm going to see if there's anyone waiting downstairs." Said Jeanie.

"Yeah go, come on kid let's lay down for a second." Said Berger trying to settle Roger on the couch. "This was so much easier when you were a kid."

"Everything was easier then." Mumbled Roger.

"Rest Kid." Said Berger sitting on the floor next to the couch when Jeanie came back in. "Anything?"

"No, how is he?"

"This isn't good Jeanie, he's sick. We need to get him off whatever he's on."

"I'm going to call the boys and Maureen and see what happened." Jeanie dialed the phone number to the loft.

"SSSPPEEEAAKKK!"

"Hi Kids, its Jeanie someone needs to answer the phone."

"Jeanie, its Collins is everything okay? I don't know where Roger is he took off about an hour and a half ago."

"He's here, extremely upset and sick, what happened?"

"Um, he went out earlier to get something, then came back and foundâ€¦" Collins stopped to collect himself. "He found April in the bathroom, she committed suicide."

"Oh my god, okay Honey do you know what he's using?"

"Its heroin Jeanie and maybe a bit of coke. There is something else."

"What Honey?"

"She left a note on the mirror." Said Collins tearing up.

"What did it say?"

"Jeanie it said 'We got AIDS' I'm so sorry I should have looked out for him better, told him to stop when I saw how bad he was getting I'm so sorry Jeanie." Said Collins now openly sobbing on the

phone.

"Collins, sweetie it's okay I'm not mad at you, you did all you could. Who's taking care of April's arrangements?"

"Uh, Mo called the Eriksons to tell them. And they said that they would take care of everything and they would prefer if we not attend."

"I hate to say it Honey but I kind of agree with them, at least about Roger not going, he's not in any shape to go anywhere."

"Mo still wants to go but Mark's talking her out of it now."

"Okay well Berger and I are going to figure out what we're going to do and I'll call you guys later and check on you."

"Alright Jeanie, again I'm so sorry for all of this."

"Tom you listen to me, are you listening?"

"Yes Ma'am." Said Collins knowing Jeanie was serious.

"This is not any of your faults, Roger is a grown man. He knew what he was getting into when he started using, he made that decision not you, not Mark, not Maureen, not us. This was all him. So don't you go blaming yourself. Do you hear me?"

"Yes Jeanie."

"Good now I'm going to let you go and I want you to pass along that information to the others cause I don't want to have to repeat myself."

"I will, I'll talk to you later?"

"Either Berger and I will call you and let you know what we're going to do."

"Okay, bye Jeanie."

"Bye Sweetie." Said Jeanie hanging up the phone. "How's he doing?"

"He keeps mumbling 'why did you do this?'. "

"April killed herself today. She left a note saying 'We got AIDS'. He's using heroin and possibly coke."

"Holy shit. Okay let's not freak out until there's something for us to freak out about. How long ago did he leave the loft?"

"Hour and a half."

"If he used before coming over, he's going to be coming down soon." Said Berger glancing at his nephew who was more his son but they never made it official.

"I know, I think he wants help."

"If he came here, I think you're right. So we'll help him. We should start by getting him comfortable."

"I think he left some sweats here. I'm going to go find them."

"Rog, Bud. Mom went to get you some sweats, so I'm going to take your shoes off, okay?" He received no response until he actually started pulling on him.

"No! Get away from me! You can't have it it's mine!"

"Roger! It's Berger! Relax your clothes are wet, Mom went to get your sweats."

"You're lying! My mom isn't here! It's only me." By this time Roger was pacing around mumbling. "You're not going to trick me. It's only me here." Over and over.

"What happened?" Asked Jeanie coming into the living room with Roger's sweats.

"I tried to take his shoes off and he woke up and started pacing. I think his stash is in his shoe."

"Roger, Honey. It's Mom come into the other room and change. I'll help you if you need it."

"Mom? When did you get here where are Mark, Collins, and Maureen?"

"Baby you're not at the loft. You're home with me and Berger. Can you let me help you change out of these wet clothes?"

"Okay." Said Roger walking with Jeanie.

Jeanie brought Roger into his bedroom and started to gently pull off his shoes when she got no protest she looked up and saw that Roger had fallen into a fitful sleep again.

"Berger?"

"Yeah?" He came in and chuckled. "He pass out on you?"

"Yeah, I think its better this way. Can you check his stuff as I get it off him?"

"Gladly, give me his shoes."

"Here you go." Berger checked the shoes and found the items Roger was scared of losing.

"Jeanâ€¦"

"Oh Baby, what have you been doing to yourself?" She asked rhetorically. She finished undressing him and got his sweat pants up. "Can you sit him up so I can get a shirt on him?"

"Yeah, come on Kid work with me."

Jeanie got the shirt on him and Berger grabbed all his clothes and

brought them into the living room to finish searching for Roger's stash.

"Relax Honey, try and sleep." She said smoothing his hair back. She left the room leaving the door open. "Hey what did you find?"

"From his shoe." Said Berger pointing to the pack of heroin. "His pocket." Pointing to a small baggie of pot. "And his wallet." Showing her the baggie of coke and two condoms.

"What are we going to do?" She said sitting down.

"You mean besides smoke his pot?" He asked with a smile.

"I'm serious." She said smiling as he pocketed the pot for later.

"If it was just coke and pot I would say you and I could handle it but this is heroin Jeanie. I don't know what to do."

"I'll call the hospital and see if there are any beds in the rehab wing. Maybe they can take him today." She said picking up the phone again.

"Fairview Memorial how may I connect you?"

"Rehab unit please?"

"Please hold." Said the operator.

"Fairview Rehabilitation, this is Nick."

"Nick, its Jeanie Ryan I'm a nurse in the ER."

"Hey Jeanie. How are you?"

"Not good. Listen do you have any beds available today?"

"Jeanie what's going on?" Asked Nick concerned.

"I need a bed for my son."

"Isn't he a little young to need rehab?" Jeanie laughed; people always assumed Roger was a lot younger than he actually was.

"He's 23."

"You have a 23 year old son, how is that possible?"

"I had him when I was 18."

"Oh okay, um yeah I've got a bed. Do you know what he's using?"

"Heroin and coke, he's probably smoking pot as well, but he's been doing that since high school so I'm not worried about that. It's the other stuff. And there might be a possibility he's HIV+. I know it's asking a lot Nick but if you would take him today please?"

"Bring him in; I'll get him a bed. Do you have any kind of paperwork

stating that you can make medical decisions for him?"

"Yes, I do."

"Great, well we'll see you guys soon." Said Nick.

"Thank you so much Nick."

"It's no problem Jeanie; you know we take care of our own here."

"I know but still thank you." Said Jeanie.

"You're welcome. Bye."

"Bye." She hung up the phone and blew out a breath.

"They admitting him?" Said Berger coming into the kitchen.

"Jesus, you scared me."

"Sorry." Said Berger smiling.

"It's okay I'm just jumpy right now. They are admitting him, do you know where the paperwork he signed giving us medical rights is?"

"Yeah, I'll get it. Do you need it so he can't sign himself out?"

"Yeah that's the plan at least. I'm going to go check on him and then call the kids and let them in on what's up."

"You got it." Berger went into his room where they kept all the important paperwork.

Meanwhile at the loft Collins and Mark were still trying to calm Maureen down.

"I'm worried about Roger he hasn't been back yet." Said Maureen.

"Jeanie called while you guys were in the bedroom. Rog showed up at her place, I have a feeling they're putting him in rehab." Said Collins.

"Do you think he'll go?" Asked Maureen.

"He's not going to have a choice. Jeanie and Berger have medical authorization. They can make decisions for him if he's incapable, which he is." Explained Mark.

"We should go through his things and pack a bag for him just in case." Said Maureen sniffing as the phone rang.

"SSSPPEEEAAKKK!"

"Kids its Jeanie."

"Hey Jeanie, its Collins."

"Hi Sweetie, so I got him into rehab at the hospital."

"Good, do you need us to do anything on our end? Cause we were thinking of getting a bag together for him."

"That's a great idea any clothes you think he'd want. We'll start with clothes and go from there with other things."

"Okay, do you want me to drop it off at your place or at the hospital?"

"I'll grab it on my way to work tomorrow if that's okay."

"That's fine."

"Okay, I'll see you around 7:30ish."

"I'll be awake and waiting. Jeanie he's going to be okay, we'll all help him through this."

"Thank you Honey. I'll see you in the morning."

"Bye Jeanie."

"Bye."

Jeanie hung up the phone and headed back into the bedroom. She saw that Roger was still sleeping and Berger had dozed off in the corner chair.

"Hey Berger."

"What? Everything okay?" He asked startled.

"Yeah, I just talked to Collins he's going to pack a bag and I'll go get it in the morning."

"You want to take him in now?"

"Yeah, the sooner the better I don't think I can handle him tweaking."

"Okay, well let's get him up and to the hospital." Said Berger getting up out of the chair. "Roger, hey Kid." Berger said gently sitting on Roger's bed.

"Uncle Berger, what are you doing here?"

"I live here, what are you doing here?" Berger answered with a smile.

"I don't know, but I have a feeling you know something."

"Your mom and I decided that enough is enough, we're not going let you keep doing this to yourself. We're taking you to the hospital's rehab center and you are getting clean."

"Do I get a say in this? Were you guys going to even ask me if I want to get clean?"

"Nope, I don't care if you want to you are. End of story."

"What's the point of getting clean April's gone and I have AIDS. Might as well die on my own terms."

"Have you gotten tested?" Asked Berger quietly taking in Roger's words. He had never been this negative so it was hard for him to take it in.

"No, but if she had it, then so do I."

"Well when we get to the hospital we'll find out for sure, and the point of getting clean is so I don't have to make funeral arrangements and comfort your mother cause someone sold you a bad batch of whatever shit you took. So think about it if you don't want to get clean and fight this for yourself, do it for us. Because I know from experience how hard it is to say goodbye to someone you love when they die of things beyond your control and it still hasn't hit you that April's gone."

"It's hit me; it hit me the minute I had to pull her wet and cold body out of the fucking bathtub okay!"

"Okay. Well this is why you are getting clean so we don't have to pull yours out of one or an alley or heaven forbid never find you."

"Fine I'll do it, but if I don't like it I'm leaving."

"That's fine. Get up we're going now." Berger didn't have the heart at the moment to tell him there was no way he could leave.

"Can I have my shoes or am I going barefoot in my socks."

"Your shoes are in the living room."

"My jeans?"

"They were wet so your mom is washing them for you. You'll get them probably tomorrow. For now you are wearing those." Said Berger.

"Okay."

"Let's go Kid and get you well."

"Yeah only to die later slowly and probably painfully." Said Roger.

"Listen you can be pissed off all you want about the hand you're being dealt, but talk that way around your mom and so help me I will kick your ass, understand?"

"Yes."

The two men made their way to the living room where Jeanie was waiting for them.

"You ready to go?" Asked Jeanie.

"No, but I'll go anyways." Said Roger.

"Okay, let's go."

Jeanie walked down in front of the guys and quickly got a cab, she slid in first with Berger practically shoving Roger in before getting in himself and telling the cab driver which hospital to go to.

"I'm scared." Said Roger so quietly they almost didn't hear him.

"I know Honey, but we're going to get you better. I'm going to come up and see you on my lunch breaks and before I leave and soon your friends will be able to come see you. We just need to get you off the stuff you're on."

"But what about the other thing?"

"We'll cross that bridge when we get to it okay?" Jeanie said as Roger rested his head on her shoulder.

"I'm sorry Mom."

"I know Honey."

They arrived at the hospital and made their way to the rehab unit. It was a lock down area in the hospital on the same floor with the psychiatric ward.

"Can I help you?" Came a voice after Jeanie hit the buzzer/intercom.

"It's Jeanie Ryan I have my son and a friend with me. My son needs to be admitted."

"Hang on." Said the disembodied voice.

(BUZZZZZZ)

"Hey Guys." Said Nick opening the door.

"Hi Nick." Said Jeanie with a small smile.

"Well come on in. We'll get the paperwork started while we get him settled."

"Okay. Well this is Roger."

"Hi Roger, listen I know this is hard but I'm have them start getting you settled while I talk to your parents and get the paperwork started."

"My mom can't come with me?"

"I'll see you before we leave why don't you go find your bed okay?"

"Okay." Said Roger.

"Joey. Can you take Roger to room 115?"

"Sure, come on man the room's empty if you want the window bed you'll get it." Said Joey with a smile.

"Okay. Hey Uncle Berger I know you took my pot save it for me?" Asked Roger hopefully.

"We'll see Kid you get off all the other stuff and we'll see." Said Berger.

"Okay."

"Is he usually this subdued?" Asked Nick.

"No, he used to be full of life. That is not my son Nick. I want him back." Said Jeanie finally breaking down. Berger had been wondering when this was going to happen.

"We'll get him back Jeanie and before you know it he'll be leaving open condoms on the fruit again."

"I can't wait." She said with a laugh.

"I'm not even going to ask." Said Nick.

"It's a long story." Said Berger.

"Here's the paperwork I need you guys to fill out, did you bring the medical authorization form?"

"Yeah, here. Now you'll test him for the HIV?" Asked Jeanie.

"We do a drug screen to find out what he's taken in the last few days, I'll throw in an order for the HIV test too."

"Okay, now when you get the results we want to be there when you tell him, there is no way I'm letting him go through that by himself. Also and I know I sound like a crazy person but I want to be informed of everything going on with him, this is my baby, our baby." She said with firm conviction.

"I totally understand I will personally call you daily with updates."

"Well you'll also see me daily I'll be up here on my lunch break. Cause if he's not cooperating you'll need someone to work with him, he can't say no to me, never has been able to."

"You got it." Said Nick now understanding the relationship between this family.

"He'll have clothes tomorrow morning his roommates are packing a bag for him." Said Berger.

"Okay."

"Here's the intake form." Said Jeanie who was filling it out as she was talking. "He doesn't have anything on him we confiscated it all at the house."

"We still have to search him."

"Okay."

"You guys are doing the right thing, he's going to get the help he needs." Said Nick.

"We hope so." Said Berger.

"Well everything is filled out, why don't we go see how he's doing and then we can get him started on the tests and detox." Said Nick.

"Okay." Said Jeanie as she and Berger walked down the hall following Nick.

"How did we do this cold turkey?" Asked Berger seeing different patients in various states of withdrawal and sobriety.

"We weren't coming down off of heroin; our LSD trips were only occasional. We never hit the level he has."

They reached Roger's room and saw that the nurse was drawing blood from his hand and Roger seemed to be sleeping through the whole thing.

"Katy these are Roger's parents."

"Hi, I'm almost done here."

"When did he fall asleep on you?" Asked Berger.

"He was already asleep by the time I came in." Said Katy.

"We're going to stay until he wakes up so he doesn't freak out that we just abandoned him."

"That's cool, I see so many parents that just say _'not my problem anymore, call me when he's well.'_ It's nice to see that there are one's that actually care."

"You'll be seeing a lot of us, I work downstairs." Said Jeanie.

"I thought you looked familiar." Said Katy.

"Mom?" Asked Roger waking up.

"Hey Sweetie, I'm right here. So is Uncle Berger you're okay you're safe."

"Where am I?"

"Remember we brought you to the hospital to get better man." Said Berger moving to where Roger could see him better.

"I thought that was a dream."

"Sorry Honey it wasn't. Why don't you go back to sleep and I'll see you tomorrow on my lunch break okay?"

"Okay, we have a date." Said Roger quietly.

"We have a date." Said Jeanie agreeing with him.

Leaving him in the rehab center was the hardest thing Jeanie and Berger had to do since they sent Claude off many years before.

"Maybe I should check and make sure he has enough blankets." Said Jeanie starting to turn around.

"Jeanie, he's going to start detoxing the last thing he's going to need is a pile of blankets tangling him up."

"Well then maybe I should stay with him. He might need me."

"Jeanie, Babe. I know you want him better now, but you gotta let the staff do it. That's why we brought him here instead of doing this at home. He needs more help than we can give him, you can check on him tomorrow now let these people do their jobs and let's go home cause we've got a long road ahead of us."

"You're right, let's go."

Jeanie and Berger arrived home a short time later feeling empty at the fact that they left Roger somewhere that was out of their control. It was one thing when Roger moved into the loft he was 19 and needed his own space to come and go, but now he was sick and someone else was taking care of him it was a hard pill for Jeanie and Berger to swallow.

"What do you want for dinner?" Asked Berger, when he got no answer he tried again. "Jeanie, what do you want for dinner?"

"I'm not hungry Honey thanks though."

"Okay, what's going on in that head of yours?"

"Do you think I was a bad mother?"

"WHAT? Are you smoking crack? Jeanie you were the best mother you could be, we had a lot of stuff going on when we were kids youâ€we did the best we knew how with him it is not our fault hell it's not even his fault this happened, life just sucks sometimes."

"What if the drugs I did while I was pregnant with him somehow caused this to happen?"

"No I believe that looking back we got lucky with Roger being healthy, but Jeanie he knew the hazards of taking drugs we made sure he knew of the them. So no the drugs you took while pregnant didn't cause him to start taking them 23 years later."

"I'm just scared I'm not going to get my son back."

"You will he's strong, he will get through this."

By the time dinner rolled around both Berger and Jeanie realized that they weren't all that hungry and decided to turn in for the night. Berger realized that he had a couple pages left to draw and got on

those and finished them a couple hours later. Jeanie meanwhile tried to read for a bit and couldn't. The book had been recommended to her by Collins and right now she just couldn't get into it. She decided to call Sheila and vent for a while.

"Hello?"

"John, it's Jeanie is Sheila there?" Asking Sheila's husband.

"Yeah hang on Jeanie, hey are you okay?"

"Not really, but it will get better."

"Okay well here's Sheila. I'll talk to you later."

"Bye John."

"Who is it?" Jeanie heard Sheila ask.

"It's Jeanie she doesn't sound good."

"Jeanie what's wrong?" Asked Sheila concerned.

"We had to put Roger in the hospital's rehab center today."

"What? What happened?"

"Remember that girl he was dating April?"

"Yeah, they seemed happy when we saw them last time."

"She was a drug addict and Roger started using too, this morning he found her in the bathtub. She committed suicide."

"Oh my God! Did she leave a note?"

"Yeah, I guess she got tested for AIDS and it came back positive. Roger might be infected. They drew blood when we got him admitted."

"Jeanie I'm so sorry, is there anything we can do?"

"Not right now just keep him in your thoughts."

"I will so how did you find out about April?"

"Roger showed up out of the blue at the door so I called the loft and Collins told me what happened. Berger and I decided that this was it so we cleaned him up and brought him into the hospital."

"Is he at the hospital you work at?"

"Yeah."

"Well that will be good at least you'll be able to visit whenever you are able."

"That was the upside, he actually asked me for a lunch date tomorrow so I'm going to go up and sit with him for a bit."

"How's Berger taking it?"

"He's trying to be strong, but you know him. It's killing him. Roger made him promise not to smoke the baggie of pot we took from him, without him."

"Oh dear God, Berger stole Roger's pot?"

"Well it's better than when Roger stole his."

"You would have thought the world ended that day." Said Sheila with a laugh remember the day she got the call from Berger complaining that Roger stole his pot.

"No kidding, but you know Berger was so proud as well. I think we are the few parents that are actually proud that our son decided to steal their pot instead of trying to go out and find their own."

"Safer too. Jeanie, he will get through this he's strong and he's got all of us to back him up if he falls. Plus I like to believe that Claude is watching out for all of us." Said Sheila.

"God I hope so, cause we could use him now more than ever." Said Jeanie.

"Honey, why don't you go take a long hot shower. Go to bed and I'll talk to you tomorrow after your visit with Rog."

"Okay, thanks Sheila."

"No problem, I'm here you know that."

"I know, Collins actually recommended this book I was starting to read before Roger got here, maybe I'll try to get into that."

"Let me know how it is maybe I'll read it too."

"You got it."

"Bye Sweetie."

"Bye." Sheila hung up the phone and looked at her husband.

"What's up Jeanie okay?"

"They had to put Roger in rehab today."

"He's gotten that bad?"

"His girlfriend committed suicide. God John I remember when Roger was born we were all so happy again, we hadn't been since Claude died and then this little boy just brought the light back and now the darkness is there again, and there is nothing we can do."

"Roger is a strong kid, he will get through this, the light is going to come back soon."

"I hope so cause I don't think we could handle it leaving forever." Said Sheila hugging John close to her.

"I know."

The next morning Jeanie left the house and headed over to the loft, Collins was sitting on the stoop with Roger's gym bag from high school next to him.

"Hey Honey."

"Hey Jeanie. Is he okay?" Asked Collins.

"I talked to Nick last night, he got sick a couple times but slept okay. Tom you know it's only going to get harder from here on out for him."

"I know, but he's strong right."

"He is. So how was your guys' night last night?" Asked Jeanie sitting down with him and stealing his cigarette.

"Hard, we went through all his stuff, found their stashes and their paraphernalia tossed it into the river last night, and then it was quiet."

"What do you mean quiet?"

"Well the last few months, it's been Rog and April arguing, Rog snoring, or them going at it like rabbits." Jeanie had to laugh at Collins' description.

"Quiet is good. Just remember I had him for 19 years at my place snoring, plus Berger. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy."

"Did Claude snore?" Jeanie and Collins often had these talks about the days before Roger came along.

"Not really, mostly after he drank. Claude as I've told you before was a quiet guy to begin with, but when he was with Berger he came to life while at the same time he brought Berger down to Earth. He was our light, and when he died and Roger was born Roger became the light. He'll come back to the light soon we just have to be strong for him while he can't be strong for himself. Has he pawned anything over the last few months?"

"Not that I know of the most valuable thing he has is his guitar and that's upstairs in his room."

"Okay, good if you figure out that anything is missing let me know and we'll go find it."

"You got it."

"Well I have to go see him before my shift, I'll call you later."

"Okay Jeanie, be safe."

"You too."

Jeanie arrived at the hospital checking into the ER and see that it was slow for now and after talking to her supervisor about everything

she headed up to the rehab unit and got buzzed in.

"Hi I'm here to see Roger Davis?"

"And you are?"

"I'm Jeanie Ryan I work in the ER and I'm also his mother I just want to check on him before my shift starts."

"Come on in." Said the female nurse.

"Is Nick on yet?" Asked Jeanie.

"Not yet, he comes on at 10."

"Okay, so was he okay last night for you guys?"

"He had a rough night, and he's not really calm right now." Said the nurse trailing off as a loud screaming voice rang out in the hall.

"I WANT MY MOM, WHERE IS SHE? YOU'RE KEEPING HER FROM ME! CALL HER!"

"ROGER! THAT IS NO WAY TO TALK TO SOMEONE TRYING TO HELP YOU! NOW CALM YOUR ASS DOWN AND GET BACK IN YOUR ROOM! NOW!"

"But Momâ€¦"

"Rogerâ€¦Claudeâ€¦Davis so help me if you don't get back into that room, I will get your Uncle down here to make good on his promise. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"Good, now move." Roger turned around and went back into his room with 2 orderlies following him.

"Holy shit, how did you do that?"

"Easy I don't yell often, and Berger doesn't ever threaten him, but when I do, and Berger does, he listens."

"Maybe you should transfer up here, I could use you on a few other patients." Said the nurse.

"I'm good where I am, but if he gives you shit call me I'll deal with him."

"You got it."

Jeanie left the lounge area and went into Roger's room where he was sitting on his bed with his head facing the floor.

"You want to tell me what the outburst was about?"

"I wanted you but they said they wouldn't get you for me."

"What we said was we had called the number you gave us and your husband said you had already left." Jeanie didn't even flinch when

they called Berger her husband it happened all the time.

"Roger, I went to meet Collins so I could get you some clothes, and then I had the travel time to get here."

"I didn'tâ€| they didn't tell me that."

"Probably cause they woke Berger up, he couldn't sleep last night so he ended up smoking a joint and working on his new project. He didn't fall asleep until 5 am. You and I both know how he is when woken up."

"Yeah, not functional."

"Exactly. So what did you need to see me about?"

"I don't feel well, isn't there something they can give me to take the edge off?"

"I'm sorry Honey; you're going to have to do this the hard way. But at least if you do it this way you'll know never to do it again. Right?"

"Yeah, wait you said Berger smoked a joint last night? It was his own pot right?"

"I don't know you'll have to ask him when he comes up to visit you. By the way I brought you some clothes."

"My clothes?"

"Yup from the loft Tom and Maureen packed them for you last night."

"What did they do with my stuff?"

"What stuff?" Asked Jeanie knowing full well what he was asking about.

"Mom? What did they do with everything?"

"Tom told me they are in the bottom of the Hudson."

"Okay, I guess that's the best place for it."

"It is Baby, it is. You are going to get through this everyone is pulling for you your friends, us, I talked to Aunt Sheila so there is no doubt that the whole Tribe is pulling for you, you will beat this no matter what happens."

"Okay. I'll get better. Did they take the blood tests for you know?"

"Yeah, yesterday. But there aren't any results yet, I'll talk to Nick before I leave. Why don't you relax some more. And I'll go find that out, okay?"

"Okay, thanks Mom. For everything."

"There is no thanks needed but I appreciate it. Get some sleep. I'll

see you for lunch."

"Okay."

Jeanie headed out into the lobby and ran into Nick who was just starting his shift.

"Hey Jeanie."

"Hey Nick."

"So I hear we had quite the welcome for you today."

"Yup, told ya he couldn't say no to me, and one of the nurses misunderstood Berger this morning and told that to Roger and that is what set him off."

"I take it, you guys didn't have an easy night?"

"Berger stayed up to work on a project until 5 this morning I only went to bed because I had to work today."

"I understand the important thing is you guys take care of yourselves and let us take care of him."

"I know, speaking of taking care of him did you get the test results in yet?"

"No. They should be back soon but nothing yet. Until they do we have him on an AZT pill just in case better to get him started now than when it's too late. Now I know you just brought him in yesterday, but have you thought about after he's clean and ready to be released?"

"We'll probably have him at our place until he's ready to go back to his loft. I'm not letting him go until I know he's kicked this once and for all."

"He will Jeanie he's got a great support system in you and Berger."

"And his friends and mine and Berger's friends, plus we like to think there's a guardian angel looking out for him."

"It's always good to have those."

"Yeah. Well I'm going to work, I'll see you in a couple hours."

"See ya."

Jeanie headed downstairs and worked on a few cases her most interesting was a 19 year old who came in with a toothpick in her foot. The story was that she was making her mother's bed and stepped on it. The girl thought it was a piece of wicker from the mother's collection of baskets until Jeanie and Greg took it out and saw that it was a toothpick, while the mother laughed she was also very apologetic to the daughter turns out the toothpick fell off the night table and landed awkwardly in the very short berber carpeting. The girl so high on the numbing agent they gave her, she walked out of the ER with only one shoe on and no socks. She had a few other cases

before Jane came over and told her that she would cover while Jeanie went on break.

"Okay well if you need me I'm going to be upstairs with Roger."

"You got it, give him my love."

"I will, if Berger shows up can you tell him where I am?"

"Yup." Said Jane.

"Thanks."

Jeanie headed upstairs and was greeted with an agitated Roger once again. He had been so agitated that the doctor on call had to give him a sedative, with Jeanie's permission.

"Nick can you call Jane downstairs and then Berger and tell him to get here?"

"Yeah, you want me to tell Jane you aren't going back?"

"Could you I think it's better if I just stay with him."

"No problem, I'm sorry we had to do that but the doctor was afraid he would hurt himself in the state he was in and he kept screaming for April?"

"April was his girlfriend."

"Was?"

"She died yesterday, he's the one that found her."

"If you don't mind, how?"

"Suicide in the tub, she found out she was positive plus she was an addict."

"Heroin?"

"Yeah."

"You going to be okay?"

"No I just want my little boy back."

"I know. I'm going to go make those phone calls. Will Berger answer?"

"Yeah, he should be up by now."

"Okay. I'll be right back."

Nick found Roger's file and called Berger and Jeanie's number.

"Hello?" Said Berger sounding distracted.

"Hi Berger?"

"Yeah."

"Hey, it's Nick from the hospital's rehab."

"Sure, what's up Kid giving you shit?"

"Um, he had a rough morning. We had to sedate him, Jeanie asked me to call you and have you come down."

"I'm on my way, tell her not to go back to work. I am on my way."

"I will."

"Thanks Nick."

"No problem."

Berger and Nick both hung up and Berger headed out the door as fast as he could. Amazingly he caught a cab immediately and told the cab driver to step on it. Berger made it to the hospital in record time you would have thought he had taken an ambulance.

"Jane, where's Jeanie."

"She's upstairs with Roger, Nick just called down saying she wasn't coming back today honestly Hon I'm surprised she came in at all."

"You know her, I think she thought it would keep her mind off of things."

"Well tell her she's got tomorrow off too."

"I will thanks Jane."

"You know Berger when things settle down maybe we could grab dinner one night."

"Jane, I like ya; I'm just not interested, besides you work with Jeanie and that comes first. Thank you for the offer though."

"No problem, just thought I'd ask."

"Hey I'll see ya later."

Berger left the ER and finally found his way to the rehab unit and got buzzed in.

"Hey, everything okay?" He asked finding Jeanie in Roger's room.

"He was agitated when I got here this morning I thought I had him calmed down, I went to work and then when I got back up here Nick told me he got so bad that they had to sedate him."

"Why was he agitated this morning?"

"I guess he wanted us, and when the nurse called the house you told her I had already left. I think he thought they were lying to him, I had to yell at him and threaten him with you to get him down. Then he

fell asleep and I went to work. Nick said he was asking for April."

"This isn't going to be easy is it?" Asked Berger running a hand through his hair.

"No, I know I keep saying it but I just want my little boy back Berger." Said Jeanie finally breaking down in Berger's arms.

"I know Honey, I do to. We'll get there soon. He will pull through this. I promise and you know I don't make those lightly."

"I know, God how did we let it get this bad?"

"He hid it well in the beginning and then he stopped coming around all together."

"But we should have known, I should have gone over there more. I should have done something."

"Jeanie, there is nothing you could do he had to be ready to deal with this. That's why he came home yesterday, he was ready. If him being sedated while going through withdrawals is going to help then that's what we have to do." Said Berger.

It was a rough couple weeks for the family, Roger had to be sedated a few more times, but he was finally over the worst part of withdrawals. Nick had sat Jeanie and Berger down in his second week and gave them the news that Roger was in fact HIV+, but in the state he was currently in he was not in the right mind frame to take the news so they all decided that now was when they would tell him. Roger was acting more like his old self, and had asked for his guitar to be brought in but the staff was afraid it would get harmed if they allowed it.

"Rog, Honey. We need to talk now." Said Jeanie.

"I know what you're going to say." Said Roger.

"What?" Said Berger.

"That I'm positive."

"Yeah you are Kid. But we already have you on good meds and you'll be around for a long time."

"When can I go home?"

"I'm not sure, but you aren't going to the loft just yet. You're going to stay at our place for a bit." Said Jeanie firmly. Roger knew he was not allowed to question her about it. He was staying at the apartment and that was final.

"Okay."

Roger took the news better than Jeanie and Berger had thought he would but they also knew that just cause he was calm about it now didn't mean he would be later, she just hoped it wouldn't lead to another round of sedation for him.

A few weeks after the news that he was in fact positive he learned the times he had to take his meds, how much he had to take, and his major issue how to pay for them. The AZT wasn't cheap, Berger had stepped in and informed him that he and Jeanie would be taking care of it for him until he got back on his feet. Roger tried to fight him on it, but like always his mom and uncle won. The next day armed with an overnight bag and a new prescription of AZT Roger returned to his parents' apartment for the first time since he showed up their doorstep high as a kite.

"Welcome home Kid."

"Thanks, it's good to be home."

"Honey I'm going to start dinner why don't you go put your stuff away and then we'll sit down to eat." Said Jeanie.

"Okay Mom." Roger headed down to his room and started to put his clothes in his old dresser.

"Did you get it?"

"Yeah, it's on his bed."

"How did my guitar get here?" They heard Roger say.

"I picked it up from the loft this morning. I got you a new set of strings so you'll have to retune it."

"Why what happened to the old ones?" Asked Roger curiously.

"Maureen was searching your room and remembered the story about Johnny Cash hiding his pill stash in his guitar so she found a set of wire cutters and cut them. Or so Mark told me this morning when I picked it up."

"I love her, but I'm going to kill her." Said Roger showing a small smile. "I never kept any stash in or around my guitar there's a loose floorboard on my side of the bed I kept mine in there April's was under the mattress and inside the lamp."

"I'll send the crew after it later." Said Berger making a mental note to call the loft.

Meanwhile in the kitchen the phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Hey Jeanie, it's Woof. I was just calling to see how Rog was doing today."

"He's home, hang on let me get him. Roger!"

"Yeah?"

"Phone for you, it's Uncle Woof." Said Jeanie with a smile. Roger took the phone from Jeanie and started a long conversation with Woof even getting to add in that he was going to kill Maureen to which Woof and Jeanie both laughed knowing her gentle son wouldn't do a thing, he may say something to her but it was nothing like he said he

would do.

"Why are you going to kill her, Rog?" Asked Woof.

"The woman is crazy what other reason is there?"

"What did she do?"

"Uncle Woof she cut the strings off my guitar."

"Why did she do that?" Asked Woof knowing there had to be a reason. Jeanie sat back with Berger just watching how animated her son seemed to become while telling his latest roommate troubles to the Shaman of the group.

"Because she saw or read some story about how when Johnny Cash was busted he hid his stash in his guitar, so she got it in her crazy mind that that's where mine was."

"Where was your's?"

"In the floorboards."

"Nice spot. Berger hid his in a hollowed out algebra book and Claude's was on the top shelf of his closet, he had a box that had a bunch of old school notebooks in it."

"Really? An algebra book?" Said Roger looking at Berger. "I expected better from you. At least Uncle Claude's was creative."

"Hey Woof quit givin' away my secrets!" Said Berger jokingly.

"So how did she get the strings off?"

"She found wire cutters somewhere and used them."

"Rog, I've been to your place why would you guys have wire cutters laying around?"

"If Mark needs to fix his projector he uses them, or when Benny was working on one of his projects."

"Hide them next time."

"There is no next time, cause I'm going to kill her." Said Roger with a smile.

"Oh stop your whining I bought you new strings get over it." Said Berger.

"That's not the point, it was tuned perfectly now I have to start all over."

"Poor Baby let me talk to Berger, and go string up your guitar."

"Bye Uncle Woof."

"Bye Kid." Roger handed the phone to Berger and went back to his room.

"Hey Man."

"Hey, he seems good almost like this all never happened."

"He looks better too, but he still has a long road."

"He'll get there."

A month later Roger was still staying with them and had started going to NA. One night Jeanie had had enough of Muzetta's Waltz playing non-stop.

"Roger!"

"Yeah?"

"Can you please play another song? Any song I beg of you. Cause if hear Muzetta's Waltz one more time I'm going to strangle you."

"Can I go back to the loft?"

"What?"

"Mom, I'm clean now. I've been clean for months, I've loved this time here with you and Uncle Berger but I need to try it on my own. I need to go to NA by myself without Berger walking me there like I'm a kindergartner going to school. I need to learn how to live there clean."

"If that's what you want, I'll talk to Berger and we can bring you over tomorrow or something."

"Thank you."

That night when Berger got home from a meeting Jeanie told him about her conversation with Roger.

"Jeanie, you know we wouldn't have been able to keep him here forever."

"I know, but I'm scared for him."

"As much as we wish he wasn't he's a grown man. He's got to stand on his own two feet."

"You're right, he's right. I just hope he's okay."

"He will be."

The next day found the family bringing Roger's things back to the loft where he was greeted by his friends. When Maureen hugged him, he looked at her and whispered in her ear something that no one else heard but knew from the look on Maureen's face it had something to do with Roger's guitar.

After Roger got home he started to retreat into himself slightly, it started one day on his way home from a NA meeting when his old dealer approached him.

"I don't want anything, and I don't want any trouble."

"You can't get away from me Lover Boy."

"I can and I have." Roger walked away and headed for the loft, he immediately called Berger and explained what happened. After this incident it got harder for everyone to get Roger to leave the loft. To the point that he almost never left. Yeah he would go down to the sidewalk but that was it no further. Once a week Jeanie would come over to see him, and try to get him to go just across the street with her but he wouldn't budge. His sponsor at NA would pop by once in a while to check in. Berger would make him sit on the fire escape with him and smoke and talk about Roger's childhood or things that happened before Roger was born. Roger loved the stories that Berger would tell him about Claude.

It took one fateful Christmas Eve to change everything for Roger, he met Mimi and Collins met Angel a person who lived up to her name. Jeanie called Sheila one night to chat.

"Hello?"

"John why is it every time I call to talk to your wife you answer?"
Asked Jeanie jokingly.

"Hi Jeanie, how are you?"

"Good, but I didn't call to chat with I want your wife in more ways than one."

"Take her away will you? It's Jeanie." He said handing the phone to Sheila.

"Hello?"

"Hey Honey."

"His face is bright red what did you say to him?"

"That I wanted you."

"JEANIE!"

"For your alfredo recipe what did you think I meant, jeeze Sheila this isn't 1967 any more you are a happily married woman."

"Whatever you're still not getting it, that is one recipe that is going to the grave with me. So what's up?"

"My house is in balance again."

"What did they do?"

"Nothing yet, but I suspect some thing soon, Roger has a new girlfriend and he left the house the other night."

"Really? Who is she?"

"Wellâ€¦"

The Endâ€|for now.

End
file.